



**TESTIMONY
ELIZABETH GARA
CONNECTICUT WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION (CWWA)
BEFORE THE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 2, 2009**

RE: SB-1021, An Act Concerning Notification and Remediation of Contaminants in Drinking Water

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of private, municipal and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut. CWWA is committed to working with the state to develop policies that will ensure that Connecticut has a safe, ample supply of water to meet present and future needs.

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) and its member water companies strongly support efforts to ensure the safety and quality of Connecticut's public water supplies. We therefore **support the intent of SB-1021, An Act Concerning Notification and Remediation of Contaminants in Drinking Water**, to ensure the prompt notification and remediation of contaminants found in public water supplies.

As drafted, the bill requires the Commissioner of Public Health, after testing, to notify the municipality's legislative body regarding the presence of any contaminant. We would suggest that there are already mechanisms in place that adequately address those concerns for community water systems, which are public water systems that have at least 15 service connections or serve 25 persons on a regular, year-round basis. These community water systems are subject to extensive regulations by the Department of Public Health, required to do extensive water quality testing, and would be required to take measures to notify customers within a specified time and remediate any water quality violations.

However, unlike a community water system, *non-community water systems* – such as schools, factories, and businesses with their own water supplies – are not required to test for the presence of uranium under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Therefore, the requirement suggested in this legislation may not have the desired effect of expediting the detection and remediation of uranium in a non-community water system, such as a school.

Moreover, the legislation calls for the legislative body of the municipality to develop a plan for remediation. While this may be appropriate for situations involving a non-community water system, under federal and state law, in situations involving a public water supplier, the water company is already required to test and remediate any

contamination. They would have the expertise and be best suited to develop and implement such a plan.

In addition, all "*community water systems*" in Connecticut are required to prepare and deliver public reports on the sources and quality of their drinking water supplies by July 1 each year. Consumer Confidence Reports, required under the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, give citizens critical information about the sources and quality of the water they consume. The reports are designed to help consumers make practical, knowledgeable decisions about their health and their environment. The reports, which must be sent to the local health director in each town served by the community water system, are required to include a notice of any violation, such as the presence of any contaminants in the public water supply. Many water companies also provide copies of such reports to the chief elected officials in the towns served, although this is not required. "*Non-community public water systems*", however, are not required to prepare Consumer Confidence Reports, under the federal law and therefore if contaminants are found, there are currently no notification requirements.

We bring these issues to your attention so that the legislation can be modified to more appropriately address the issues pertaining to the presence of contaminants in a non-community public water system. CWWA would be pleased to work with the committee and the DPH in developing language to address these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact CWWA's Executive Director, Elizabeth Gara, at 860-547-0566.